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SUBJECT: ARROYO CALLS FORD "A DEDICATED LEADER"

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[1](#)B. STATE 203066

[1](#)1. (U) As widely reported in the local media, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo praised former President Gerald Ford in a December 28 letter to his widow, calling him a "dedicated leader" who "led the country through a challenging period of transition for all Americans." President Arroyo spoke "on behalf of the people and government of the Philippines... in convey(ing) heartfelt condolences over the passing of your husband... Our prayers are with you and your family in this most difficult time."

[1](#)2. (U) The Department of Foreign Affairs on December 29 released a statement from Secretary Alberto Romulo on the death of former President Ford. The text of the statement follows:

BEGIN TEXT

The People of the Philippines join our friends from the United States of America in mourning the passing of former U.S. President Gerald R. Ford, a true statesman and friend of the Philippines and all freedom-loving nations of the world.

We remember the late President as a man of impeccable character and integrity, whose quiet dignity and true commitment to the service of his nation made him the ideal leader for the United States during a period of healing and reconciliation.

During this time of remembrance, it is apt to recall the significant milestone in the RP-US relations which was achieved during President Ford's visit to the Philippines in December 1975. During said visit, the leaders of both countries affirmed that the Philippine-US security partnership was not directed toward any country, but was meant to preserve and promote the welfare of both countries as well as contribute to global peace and progress.

These ideals remain the basic tenets of RP-US relations over thirty years after said visit. President Ford must therefore be credited in no small part for helping pave the way for the development of the solid and mature character of the relationship between our two countries today.

The world has lost a great leader. But his immeasurable contributions to his country and the entire world, and the unassailable strength of his character, will ever be remembered.

END TEXT

[1](#)3. (U) Senior diplomats from Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Finland, France, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, Turkey, United Kingdom, and Vietnam continued to pay their respects and signed the

condolence book on December 29.

Visit Embassy Manila's Classified website:

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eap/manila/index.cfm>

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